

WELFARE DEPARTMENT

~ 2003 ANNUAL REPORT ~

Background - In New Hampshire, each town has a welfare office that is governed by State Statute (RSA 165), which reads, "Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself, he shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town, whether or not he has a residence there." As with all towns, Milford is legally obligated to assist those who qualify, regardless of funds budgeted.

The Budget – Even though the Welfare Department over-expended its budget by approximately \$30,000, (20%), the amount expended in 2003 is slightly less than that in 2002. The number of residents applying for assistance remained about the same.

Milford Assistance - There are a number of factors which contribute to individuals qualifying for assistance, including unemployment and longer-than-normal time in securing new positions, increased rental costs, high child care costs, and lengthy turn-around time from Social Security and State Welfare. Other contributing factors include the fact that wages are not keeping with the cost of living, prescription costs are increasing, and fewer people have private health insurance. Due to a cold start of winter, residents needed heating assistance prior to the commencement of Southern New Hampshire Services' Fuel Assistance program, which meant the Town expended more than anticipated in a short time on heating costs.

Role of a Welfare Official - On a positive note, a number of items were accomplished in 2003 including updating guidelines and using the new Welfare software, "MAPS," for the entire year, which allows for improved methods of obtaining statistics and producing state-approved forms. As Welfare Director, I actively participate in the Nashua Continuum of Care, Greater Milford Outreach (GMO), and the NH Local Welfare Administrator's Association. Through the GMO, I have partnered with other professionals to address the growing concern of homeless teenagers within the community. We are looking for ways to encourage them to stay in school and become employable, offer more education on the dangers and consequences of illegal drugs, and help them to gain self-esteem and become self-sufficient. In 2004, I look forward to working with Greater Nashua Interfaith Hospitality Network, which will be starting a shelter program in this area for homeless families.

The majority of time spent in the Welfare Department is meeting with clients and determining eligibility for assistance. Barriers are identified (i.e., what is making someone feel he/she needs to depend on welfare?) and eliminating those barriers. A pro-active approach is taken in trying to help people, not only with financial assistance, but with referrals and finding ways to assist them in becoming more independent. Ongoing efforts include using new methods for improved case management, particularly for habitual welfare clients. I am also aggressively pursuing potential abuse within the welfare system and identifying ways to stop it, as well as acting on methods to recover costs from other sources (Medicaid, Social Security, liens, Welfare-to-Work programs, etc.).

Thank You - I would like to thank Sandy Morgan for volunteering throughout the year and Stephanie Guertin, who completed a summer internship at Milford Welfare. Also, my appreciation goes to SHARE, Katie Chambers, and the selectmen for their continued support.

Statistics - Definition of "client" is the household being represented – it could be an individual or a family. Some clients are assisted only one time, while others are assisted multiple times.

Client Meetings – Met with clients at scheduled appointments. 361
This figure is made up of 200 clients, of which 20% were denied.

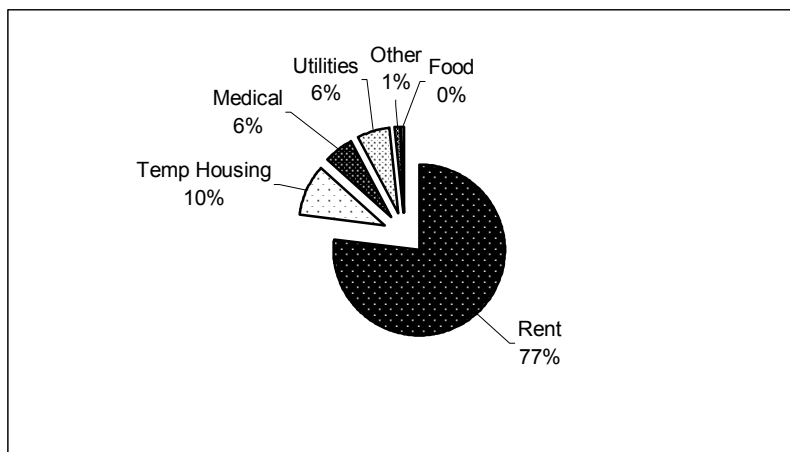
No Shows – Scheduled appointments, but clients failed to come in. 167

Contacts – Via phone or drop in. No financial assistance provided, but referred to other agencies. 162

Quantity of Known Homeless 8 clients (14 individuals)

Rent	\$131,895
Temporary Housing	\$ 16,310 (motels or shelters)
Medical	\$ 9,786
Utilities*	\$ 10,432
Other	\$ 2,245 (burials, vehicles, etc.)
Food*	\$ 782

Total \$ expended on Direct Relief	\$171,451
Budgeted Amount for Direct Relief	\$142,536
Percentage over-budget	20%



* The dollar amounts for both Utilities and Food could potentially be higher, but a significant amount of clients are assisted via Southern NH Services and SHARE.

Respectfully Submitted,

Maria Brown, Welfare Director